



New secondary diploma

to meet students' workplace needs

A national diploma with an emphasis on personal and cultural development is now available, as **Deirdre Jackson** explains.





Deirdre is Director of Assessment Services with ACER.

ACER has recently developed the National Diploma of Education for students in the final years of secondary school. It has been designed to provide learning experiences that integrate personal development and academic skills with an extended practical workplace experience in order to develop the attributes necessary for effective workforce participation.

ACER developed the diploma in association with Wesley College in Melbourne, the first school to implement the diploma. (See case study.) ACER is now making the diploma available to be offered at other schools and institutions.

The program offers the opportunity for students to undertake their academic learning within the context of an intensive and extended vocational experience. The course requires ten weeks of vocational placement for each year of the course. This provides an excellent opportunity for people to view what they are learning in relation

to what they see in the workplace and community.

The National Diploma of Education has a strong emphasis on personal and cultural development. Students complete 40 hours of community service, which may include participation in a community-based project, voluntary work, or a structured activity such as taking care of a family member or supporting a refugee family. The aim of this is to develop self-confidence, teamwork and a sense of social awareness.

The course is available at Standard or Advanced Level. The Standard Level course is designed for students who are interested in moving directly into employment or further vocational education after completing secondary school. This stream covers: industry learning, personal development, employability skills, literacy, numeracy and ICT literacy. Completion of the course also includes an accredited VET qualification (Certificate II in Work Preparation).

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National Diploma of Education

Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School

ACER has worked with Wesley College in Melbourne to develop a new senior years curriculum to be delivered on location in the Kimberley region in Western Australia during the dry season and in Melbourne for the remainder of the year.

The Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School is located on the Leopold Downs Cattle Station via Fitzroy Crossing, about 400 kilometres from Broome.

Eight students from Fitzroy Crossing and 13 from Wesley College in Melbourne have joined the National Diploma of Education program in the first group. During August and September 2010 the Year 10 students spent four weeks at Yiramalay for the first part of the induction process. All the students then spent four weeks in Melbourne in October, along with

some other members of the Fitzroy Crossing community.

Wesley College Principal Dr Helen Drennen said, 'It's been great to see how the students have interacted and bonded with each other, and to see how they've grown and reflected on what they've learnt.'

'We have been overwhelmed by their positive response. All have responded beyond our expectations. The students care for each other, tolerate problems, and work to find a solution. It really highlights the value of experiential learning.'

The development of the Studio School is funded outside Wesley College. The Bunuba Cattle Company, in a significant contribution, sold property to provide some of the capital seed funding for the project.

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The Advanced Level course is designed for students who may want to undertake university studies. The course could include a current senior secondary qualification or the International Baccalaureate. A student receives the National Diploma in addition to other certificates (such as the Victorian Certificate of Education or Western Australian Certificate of Education) if they meet the requirements for those certificates. The course could also incorporate subjects from the new national curriculum. Students who complete the National Diploma of Education who want to be considered for university entrance need to complete an additional assessment: uniTEST. The Advanced Level course includes: industry learning, personal development and academic learning. The study of English is compulsory, and includes English subjects drawn from state and territory senior secondary certificates or the International Baccalaureate. Students must also complete three other subjects across at least two of the following domains:

humanities and social sciences; mathematics, science or technology; and creative arts.

Students who undertake a full-time National Diploma course after completing Year 10 would usually complete the course at the end of Year 12. Students can take longer than two years if they are studying part time, or if they need an extended period to meet the required standard for any particular subject.

The National Diploma tells people, including employers and tertiary institutions, that a student has everyday adult skills in: reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, computers and the internet. It also certifies that the student has completed a full program as part of senior secondary education and has undertaken workplace training.

The National Diploma is assessed by teachers, supervisors, students or peers (verified by teacher/supervisor). Evidence for assessment may include:

- reflective work journals, diaries or logbooks;

- oral presentations, research assignments, videos, Powerpoint presentations, websites;
- written reports on industry visits or work placements;
- mock interview or simulation exercises; and
- examinations and written tests.

The National Diploma is available to be offered in 'National Diploma Accredited' schools and TAFE Colleges around Australia in 2011. The schools and TAFE colleges will decide which units they are able to offer, and set their own fees.

For further information, or to discuss becoming a National Diploma provider contact ACER Assessment Services Director Deirdre Jackson by email on <jackson@acer.edu.au>. ■

Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School continued...

The partnership also received a 2009 Schools First program Seed Funding Award. This was one of 20 awards of \$25 000 to help schools continue to develop their school and community partnerships. The Schools First awards program, conducted by ACER, NAB and the Foundation for Young Australians, aims to recognise and support effective school-community partnerships.

The Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School will establish a new framework for cross-cultural learning and the development of intercultural competence among students and adults from different backgrounds. It will provide a relevant and authentic educational experience for Aboriginal students and their families. The school will provide a model for other

communities across Australia to work in collaboration.

The industry learning focus will be on the Australian cattle industry, agri-business, eco-tourism, mining management and the arts. The course will also cover personal and intercultural development.

This will be the first time that full-time study for Years 11 and 12 will be

available to students in the Fitzroy Valley. Currently their only choice is to complete Years 11 and 12 via distance education, or to leave the region.

'It's wonderful to see how positively the community at Fitzroy Crossing have embraced this. There's a very high level of community support,' Dr Drennen said. ■

